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Bernard Lamy's *L'Art de Parler* Addresses Religious Exigencies

Abstract: Bernard Lamy's view of rhetoric in *L'Art de Parler* may be explained as an attempt to address religious exigencies. Lamy advises about two religious roles: theologian and preacher. Theologians' attempts to overcome ignorance and preachers' attempts to overcome willful blindness and inattentiveness in congregations help to account for why Lamy views truth as a matter of certainty rather than probability, and argument as syllogistic rather than connected to style and audience beliefs. Since Lamy conceives of a traditional sense of rhetoric—copious eloquence—as a source of religious problems, he advocates a modernized view of rhetoric to address them.

Keywords: Bernard Lamy, *L'Art de Parler*, rhetoric and religion, syllogistic argument, invention

In an early edition of his popular and influential *L'Art de Parler* Bernard Lamy describes the discourse generated by traditional topical inventional systems as ill weeds that choke the corn.¹ This attitude ushered in a widespread “revolution” in

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¹Bernard Lamy, *La Rhétorique ou l'Art de Parler*, ed. Benoît Timmermans (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), 453 n. 2. It ran to at least twenty-nine editions and was read and cited by thinkers such as Rousseau, Rollin, Blair, Ward, and Witherspoon; see Benoît Timmermans, “Note sur la présente édition,” in *La Rhétorique ou l'Art de Parler*, 5; Pierre Swiggers, “‘Art de parler’, usage et système linguistiques chez Bernard Lamy,” in Gerda Haßler and Jürgen Storost, eds., *Kontinuität und Innovation: Studien zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachforschung vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhun-*

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invention as classical inventional systems declined or disappeared.² Scholars have explained this change as a product of the rise of the new science; topical inventional systems were replaced by a logic of induction or scientific inquiry.³ In this study we aim to supplement this explanation by making a case for what may be described as a practical explanation—reasons based on the cultural practices about which rhetorics advise.

To do so, we propose to examine Bernard Lamy's *L'Art de Parler*. Scholars have turned to *L'Art de Parler* to understand how Lamy treats issues of enduring interest involving language and discourse⁴

dert: *Festschrift für Werner Bahner zum 70. Geburtstag* (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1997), 97–106 (p. 99 n. 8); H. C. Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education: Ramus to Mme Necker de Saussure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 179; Christine Noille-Clauzade, "Bernard Lamy, ou la Rhétorique de Port-Royal," *Chroniques de Port Royal* no. 50 (2001), 541–55; Douglas Ehninger, "Bernard Lami's *L'Art de Parler*: A Critical Analysis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 32 (1946): 429–34 (p. 429); Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 108, 674 n. 624. Scholars have described Lamy's rhetoric as "without doubt one of the most popular and influential works of the entire seventeenth century. . . . For more than a hundred years *L'Art de Parler* exerted a considerable influence on rhetorical theory in England and America as well as in France" (Ehninger, "Lami," p. 429; see also Francois Girbal, *Bernard Lamy (1640–1715): Étude Biographique et Bibliographique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 4; Barbara Warnick, *The Sixth Canon: Belletristic Rhetorical Theory and its French Antecedents* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 21); "de toutes le rhétoriques publiées en français, celle qui a connu le plus grand nombre d'éditions et le plus grand retentissement" (Michel Le Guern, "L'Ellipse dans la Rhétorique Française de 1675 à 1765," *Histoire, Epistémologie, Langage* 5 (1983): 79–85 (p. 81); see also Volker Kapp, "L'apogée de l'atticisme français ou l'éloquence qui se moque de la rhétorique," in Marc Fumaroli, ed., *Histoire de la rhétorique dans l'Europe moderne, 1450–1950* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 707–86 (p. 777)); and marking the transition from rhetoric to criticism (Neil Rhodes, "From Rhetoric to Criticism," in Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22–36 (p. 26)).

²Douglas W. Ehninger, "George Campbell and the Revolution in Inventional Theory," *Southern Speech Journal* 15 (1950): 270–76; see also Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), 381–2.

³Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England*, p. 376; *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 442–3.

⁴Anissa Becerra, "Da Babel A Lebab. L'Elogio Della Differenza Linguistica e Bernard Lamy (1640–1715)," *Acme* 51 (1998): 115–35; "Fortuna e sfortuna della Rhétorique di Bernard Lamy nella cultura inglese del primo settecento," in Antonio Santucci, ed., *Filosofia e cultura nel settecento Britannico. I. Fonti e connessioni continentali John Toland e il deismo* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2000), 53–9; "Usage e Raison Nella Riflessione Filosofico-Linguistica di Bernard Lamy (1640/1715)," *Acme* 48 (1995): 85–109; Bernard Louis Crampé, "Linguistique et Rhétorique 'Cartésiennes': 'L'Art de Parler' de Bernard Lamy" (diss. New York University, 1984); Geneviève Rodis-Lewis,

or to identify his intellectual sources.⁵ But they have not intended to account for Lamy's positions on issues in rhetorical theory or his preferences for intellectual sources based on circumstances he believed rhetorical practices needed to address. Lamy's cartesianism for example is well known;⁶ still, we may ask: what circumstances made it appealing to conceive of rhetorical practices in cartesian terms? *L'Art de Parler* has been described as a "functional" rhetoric⁷—as a view of rhetoric that involves using language to produce effects in auditors' minds and the world; but why would it be appealing to conceive of rhetorical practices in functional terms?

In this essay we argue that religious exigencies help to account for Lamy's theory of rhetoric. Although Lamy claims that *L'Art de Parler* covers communication in a range of settings—pulpit, bar, business, conversation,⁸ and although Lamy published books on a number of subjects including mathematics, geometry, poetics, and perspective in painting,⁹ we focus on religion because this is for Lamy the most important scene of rhetoric. Lamy was a priest and teacher in religious schools who wrote didactic religious works for seminarians.¹⁰ *L'Art de Parler* culminates with a chapter on preaching in which he asserts that what he has said about the art of speaking and persuading generally suffices for preaching also.¹¹ Likewise, the final meeting of Lamy's *Entretiens sur les Sciences* covers theology and preaching. Religious rhetorical practices, then, are a good place to begin to understand the circumstances *L'Art de Parler* is designed to address.

"Un théoricien du langage au XVII^e siècle: Bernard Lamy," *Le Français Moderne: Revue de Linguistique Française* 36 (1968): 19–50; Lyndia Roveda, "Bernard Lamy, une poétique de l'origine du langage," *XVII^e siècle* 214 (2002): 137–53; Swiggers, "'Art de parler,'" cited in n. 1 above.

⁵Francois Girbal, "La formation augustinienne du P. B. Lamy de l'Oratoire (1660–1680)," *Société des Amis de Port-Royal* 8 (1957): 48–85; John T. Harwood, "Introduction," *The Rhetorics of Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Lamy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 131–64; Kathleen M. Jamieson, "Pascal vs. Descartes: A Clash over Rhetoric in the Seventeenth Century," *Communication Monographs* 43 (1976): 44–50; Noille-Clauzade, "Bernard Lamy, ou la Rhétorique de Port-Royal," cited in n. 1 above.

⁶Harwood, "Introduction," pp. 133–9; Thomas Carr, *Descartes and the Resilience of Rhetoric: Varieties of Cartesian Rhetorical Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 127–8; Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 179; Warnick, *The Sixth Canon*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 25.

⁸Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 14–16, 24, 378, 442.

⁹Girbal, *Lamy*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 121–34.

¹⁰For a detailed biography, see Girbal, *Lamy*, cited in n. 1 above.

¹¹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 519–20.

To answer the question of what religious exigencies motivated the view of rhetoric Lamy advocates in *L'Art de Parler*, we may be tempted to begin by over-viewing differences between Oratorian and Jesuit curricula since Lamy was an Oratorian, a teaching order second only to the Jesuits,¹² served as a teacher and has been described as "the Oratorian schoolmaster *par excellence*,"¹³ and wrote *L'Art de Parler* as a textbook for students.¹⁴ A problem with beginning broadly is that it is not possible to generalize about Oratorian or Jesuit education; there were regional differences as well as differences based on who was teaching. In fact, the curricula may have been more similar than different.¹⁵ Instead, we begin by asking how Lamy describes the exigencies he aims to address in works such as *Apparatus biblicus*, an introduction to the Bible conceived as a manual for seminarians that Lamy asserts was designed to make the study of Scripture easy for "men who are affrightened at the least appearance of labour;"¹⁶ in his *Entretiens sur les Sciences*, a work that has been described as "[t]he chief original authority for the work of the Oratorian schools;"¹⁷ and in *L'Art de Parler*. Thus we also aim to understand *L'Art de Parler* in the context of Lamy's works more broadly.

There are two main religious roles about which Lamy advises: theologian and preacher. For Lamy the roles are not unrelated as people in both must ground their work in the truth of scripture. But they have different purposes and audiences. Theologians must search for truth and defend the faith "contre les Infidelles nos ennemis, & contre nos Frères rebelles, qui sont les Heretiques. Ils doivent avoir

¹²John Patrick Donnelly, "The Congregation of the Oratory," in Richard L. DeMolen, ed., *Religious Orders of the Catholic Reformation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994), 189–216 (p. 205).

¹³Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 179.

¹⁴Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 23; Bernard Lamy, *Entretiens sur les sciences dans lesquels on apprend comment l'on doit étudier les sciences, et s'en servir pour se faire l'esprit juste, and le coeur droit*, eds. François Girbal and Pierre Clair (Paris: Universitaires de France, 1966), 146.

¹⁵Peter France, "La rhétorique chez les Oratoriens au XVIIIe siècle," in Jean Ehrard, ed., *Le Collège de Riom et l'enseignement oratorien en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: CNRS Editions; Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1993), 239–49 (p. 243).

¹⁶Bernard Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus: Or; an Introduction to the Holy Scriptures in Three Books*, trans. R. Bundy (London, 1723), ix; Arnold Ages, "Les études bibliques de Bernard Lamy," trans. Jean-Robert Armogathe, in J-R Armogathe, ed., *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1989), 182–92 (pp. 184–5).

¹⁷H. C. Barnard, "Some Sources for French Educational History to 1789," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 2 (1954): 166–9 (p. 166).

les armes à la main pendant que le Peuple sous l'autorité de l'Eglise leur Mere est en seureté, goûtant la douceur de ses fruits, comme un Enfant mange ceux du jardin du son Pere sans sçavoir par quel titre il possède ce jardin."¹⁸ The study of theology demands all of one's life,¹⁹ but "une Science mediocre sufisoit à un Predicateur qui n'a que le Peuple pour disciples."²⁰ Still, preaching "est le plus illustre emploi de l'Eglise."²¹

In what follows we cover each role in turn, submitting a rhetorical analysis: the exigencies Lamy identifies and how he proposes to address them. We explain how these practical concerns manifest themselves in positions he takes on recurring issues in rhetoric, namely the nature of truth, and the nature and place of argument in discovering and communicating it.

The discussion to follow details that the primary theological exigence Lamy addresses is ignorance, a key source of which is a focus on disputes rather than facts. Studying disputes leads to religious indifference which, in turn, leads to disorder in one's studies and in the church more generally. Significantly, Lamy does not blame the weakness of reason for ignorance. He holds that reason is too limited to understand some divine truths and may introduce error. Instead of strengthening reason, ignorance must be addressed by studying facts. This requires attentiveness, but reason also has a limited role to play as it deduces truths from first principles. For preachers, the primary exigencies Lamy addresses are obstacles they face in communicating truth: congregations may willfully blind themselves to the truth as well as be inattentive. In neither case does argument help; instead preachers ought to attend to style. Lamy does not have in mind a grand style because he holds that such a style can lead congregations to forget what they hear and attend more to the preacher and his words than to truth. Instead, preachers must represent truth in many ways in part by using figures.

¹⁸Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 282: *against our enemies the infidels and against our rebellious brothers who are heretics. They must have arms at hand so that the people under the authority of their Mother Church are secure, tasting the sweetness of its fruits, as a child eats those of the garden of his father without knowing by what title he possesses this garden.*

¹⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 285.

²⁰Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 305: *a mediocre knowledge suffices for a preacher who has only the people for disciplines.*

²¹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 304: *is the most illustrious role of the Church.*

THEOLOGICAL EXIGENCIES

The canon of invention may intersect with theological practices in at least two overlapping ways. First, inventional principles may be used to discover interpretations of sacred scripture. Such rhetorics may be oriented more toward generating a single, correct interpretation or more toward generating multiple interpretations. For example the classical stases for written documents—letter and intent, ambiguity, and so on—may be used to discover one or more ways of interpreting scripture. Second, inventional principles may be used to advocate or justify doctrinal principles to other theologians. In this case one issue is how rhetors manage multiple interpretations. At one end of the spectrum rhetorics may advise the clear presentation of facts supporting a single interpretation; at the other end they may advise the development of multiple arguments supporting one or more interpretations or at least countering competing interpretations. Thus built into rhetorics advising about theological practices are assumptions about the nature of truth—e.g., probable, certain—and what counts as a true interpretation—e.g., one closest to the literal sense, one that best withstands counterarguments. Certainly the choices thinkers make with respect to these issues are linked to philosophical assumptions which may be grounded in their intellectual sources or milieu. And it is certainly possible that they may in effect deduce their positions from a philosophical system. However, if we view rhetoric as a practical art and theories of rhetoric as advice about how to practice the arts of rhetoric, then antecedent to philosophical systems are practical circumstances the art of rhetoric is designed to address. In other words, practical circumstances condition the selection of positions on rhetorical and philosophical issues. We do not mean to draw a hard and fast distinction between the philosophical and practical but rather want to bring practical dimensions to the fore in thinking about why rhetorical theorists choose to advocate one position rather than others on recurring issues in rhetorical theory.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem Lamy identifies in theologians is ignorance. Lamy's religious works are didactic—designed to help seminarians and theologians understand scripture with particular emphasis on the Old Testament. For example the title of Book III of *Apparatus biblicus* is "Of the False Gods, Animals, Precious Stones, Diseases, and Publick Sports mentioned in the Scriptures. Together with an Explanation of Scriptural Names." As the title indicates, in this book Lamy lists the gods of pagan religions and animals in scripture, discusses plants, herbs, precious stones, metals,

spices, foods, furniture, hemorrhoids, lycanthropy, theatres, sports, and more. Lamy asks: "how can a man really call those *Divines*, who so little know what the *Scripture* says, or the Fathers or Councils have determined, on any topick."²² Combating ignorance among the French clergy was a goal of Oratorians more generally as well as Port Royalists.²³

One way of combating ignorance is studying the different positions on contentious issues, but for Lamy studying disputes is a cause of ignorance. As he puts it in *Apparatus biblicus* as well as his *Introduction à la lecture de l'Ecriture sainte* (1699): "how many are those even among those who have for many years applied themselves to the study of divinity, whose heads are not rather filled with vain and frivolous school-disputes, than their hearts and minds nourished with the truths of *Scripture*."²⁴ Different opinions obscure truth: "[p]armi la foule de tant de diferentes opinions, on ne voit presque plus ce qu'il faut croire."²⁵ In his theological works Lamy does not want to cloud the discussion with theological disputes. For example, Lamy glosses over issues of authorship and interpretation when he simply remarks: "There is a great diversity of opinions about the Author of the book of *Job*, and the time when it was written,"²⁶ and "[s]ome have asserted, that *Job*, *Judith*, and *Tobit* are only allegories: and the Jews pretend that there never was such a man as *Job*, and that the book which bears his name is nothing but a parable."²⁷ One historian has asserted: "C'est justement l'absence de médiation théologique chez Lamy qui fait de son ouvrage un tel outil historique."²⁸

Theologians who focus on disputes not only deprive themselves and others of scriptural truths but also foster indifference to religious truth and cause disorder in the church. In *Entretiens sur les Sciences* Lamy asserts: "D'autres grands Lecteurs, mais qui n'examinent rien à fond, qui sçavent le pour & le contre, n'ignorans ainsi rien de ce qu'on peut dire, tombent dans une indifférence pour la Religion. Tout leur paroît douteux: tantôt ils sont d'un sentiment, tantôt de

²²Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. viii.

²³Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 148.

²⁴Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. viii; Ages, "Les études bibliques de Bernard Lamy," cited in n. 16 above, p. 187 n. 7.

²⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 281: *among the crowd of so many different opinions, one almost no longer sees what it is necessary to believe.*

²⁶Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 287, see also p. 286.

²⁷Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 296.

²⁸Ages, "Les études bibliques de Bernard Lamy," cited in n. 16 above, p. 192.

l'autre, parcequ'ils n'en ont jamais examiné aucun comme il faut."²⁹ Indifference to truth interferes with a young student's education, and worse: "C'est l'indifference qu'on a pour la verité qui cause tout le desordre des Etudes, les erreurs, l'inutilité & le danger des Sciences."³⁰ Moreover, ignorance causes disorder in the church.³¹

For Lamy the way to address ignorance, its source in studying disputes, and its consequences of indifference and disorder, is not to strengthen reason. Certainly this is a live possibility; reason could be conceived as leading to discoveries that address ignorance, and as a way of addressing indifference by engaging in substantive rather than frivolous disputes. But for Lamy the theologian's main strategy in dealing with controversy is to collect and present facts. For example to address problems of interpretation caused by the fact that in scripture "[t]he same man, and the same thing, sometimes has two names,"³² Lamy provides in Book III of *Apparatus biblicus* a complete list of proper names discussed in scripture. His advice to those who would write on controversial subjects such as usury also focuses on collecting facts: "pour faire un bon traité de l'usure, il faut faire une Histoire de tout ce qui s'en est dit exacte & solidement prouvée, où l'on puisse voir une tradition claire de ce que l'Eglise a voulu que l'on pensât de l'usure."³³

Lamy's own work fits the bill. One scholar has described Lamy's *Introduction à la lecture de l'Ecriture sainte* as designed to dispel ignorance with learned discussions "sur les antiques pratiques juives, leurs coutumes et leurs cérémonies;"³⁴ and as distinct from the thousands of monographs on the Bible published between 1685 and 1715 in two regards: its study of the Old Testament in its own right rather

²⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 69: *Other great readers, who examine nothing thoroughly, who know the pro and contra, ignorant of what one can say, become indifferent to religion. All to them appears doubtful: sometimes they are of one sentiment, sometimes of another, because they have never examined any one of them as they should.*

³⁰Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 73: *The indifference one has for the truth causes all the disorder of the studies: the errors, the uselessness and danger of the sciences.*

³¹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 43: "On ne peut exprimer le desordre que causent dans l'Eglise ceux qui ont la temerité d'enseigner ce qu'ils ignorent, & de décider sur des points où ils ne voient goutte" (*One cannot express the disorder caused in the Church by those who have the temerity to teach what they are ignorant of, and to decide on points where they do not see*).

³²Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 362.

³³Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 354: *to compose a good treatise on usury, it is necessary to compose a good history of all that is said to be true and solidly proved, where one can see a clear tradition of what the Church has wanted one to think of usury.*

³⁴Agnes, "Les études bibliques de Bernard Lamy," cited in n. 16 above, p. 187.

than only validating the Old Testament with reference to the New and in the clarity of its writing.³⁵ In *Entretiens sur les Sciences* Lamy's Theodose recommends that Eugene read Lamy's treatise on the Jewish Passover which covers "cette seule question, si Jesus-Christ nôtre Seigneur fit la Pâque legale la veille de sa mort" and notes that to address it "[l]es Mathematiques, la Grammaire, la Critique, l'Histoire, la Theologie y sont necessaires."³⁶ He also remarks that the author "est ataqué de toutes parts, & tous les jours il est obligé de répondre à quelque adversaire nouveau."³⁷ Thus Lamy, no stranger to controversy, holds that the collection and clear presentation of facts—not argument—is central to resolving theological controversies.

How do theologians discover facts? Lamy rejects the use of commonplaces, asserting that "par la connaissance qu'il a des Pères, des conciles, des saintes Écritures, il [the theologian] apercevra d'abord si le dogme qu'on a proposé est hérétique ou catholique."³⁸ In short, theologians must consult the Bible and tradition. Lamy describes the study of theology as a history of what God has revealed to humans as reported in the Bible,³⁹ the authenticity of which Lamy defends by asking how "erreur or corruption [could] creep into" a book "which has been oftener transcribed, more read, more commented upon, more quoted, more dispersed" and more often translated than any other.⁴⁰ Lamy explains tradition as the handing down of scriptural truth from Jesus to his apostles, and from the apostles to their successors.⁴¹ Significantly, for Lamy the exercise of reason does not have much of a role in tradition; for example, a council of bishops "ne cherche pas par la subtilité du raisonnement ce qu'il faut croire: les Evêques comme témoins y déposent quelle a été la Doctrine qu'ils ont reçûe de leurs Predecesseurs, & ce que les Fideles ont crû."⁴²

³⁵ Ages, "Les études bibliques de Bernard Lamy," cited in n. 16 above, p. 186.

³⁶ Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 357: *this sole question, if Jesus Christ our Savior made a legal Passover the day before his death . . . mathematics, grammar, criticism, history, and theology are necessary.*

³⁷ Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 357: *is attacked on all sides, and everyday he is obliged to respond to some new adversary.*

³⁸ Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 452, see also p. 443: *by the knowledge he has of the fathers, councils, and scriptures, he will first perceive whether the dogma that has been proposed is heretical or catholic.*

³⁹ Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, pp. 279, 353, 354.

⁴⁰ Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 268.

⁴¹ Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 278.

⁴² Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 279: *does not search by the subtlety of reasoning what it is necessary to believe: the Bishops as witnesses testify what has been the Doctrine that they have received from their predecessors and that the faithful have believed.*

Lamy uses the limitations of reason to justify the “first and most essential rule to be followed” in scriptural interpretation: “stick closely to the sense which the church had given to us, especially in matters of faith.”⁴³

In fact, Lamy explains the existence of multiple interpretations of scripture as a consequence of scripture being far beyond understanding. As Lamy puts it in *Apparatus biblicus*: “It is not indeed to be imagined that a man can arrive at a clear knowledge of these truths; but the reason of that is not, that they contradict his reason, but that they are too much exalted above it.”⁴⁴ This is one of the main strikes against the use of reason in scriptural interpretation. One cannot reason about the divine by means of “les choses terrestres;” he asks: “De ce que par exemple les corps sont divisibles, pourroit-on conclure que la substance de l’ame puisse être divisée?”⁴⁵ At the same time, as one cannot know the causes of all things in nature, so in religious matters reason is limited.⁴⁶ Lamy holds that the scriptures contain an “ineffable mystery” that extends further than human logic, so readers must “submit [their] reason to the authority of the Scriptures, in which God is pleased to instruct [them].”⁴⁷ To do otherwise leads to error.

The introduction of error through reasoning is a second main strike against using reason in scriptural interpretation. Lamy asserts this as he discusses philosophers who reason upon the mysteries of the church and introduce “chaque année de nouveaux monstres d’erreur.”⁴⁸ Lamy continues: “Quand on réduit la Theologie à des raisonnemens humains, qu’on la traite comme on feroit une question de Phisique chacun se donnant la liberté de philosopher à sa manière, de faire des systemes qu’il croit plus vrai-semblables, il s’en fait une infinité tous diferens, ce qui rompt l’unité de la Foi.”⁴⁹ A true theologian must follow scripture and the teachings of tradition alone or the church will suffer: “[s]ans cela au lieu d’un remede il donne

⁴³Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 360.

⁴⁴Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 15, see also p. 361.

⁴⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 281: *earthly things . . . From the example that bodies are divisible, can one conclude that the substance of the soul can be divided?*

⁴⁶Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 68.

⁴⁷Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. 15.

⁴⁸Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 280: *each year new monsters of error.*

⁴⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, pp. 280–81: *When one reduces theology to human reasonings, when one treats it as a question of physics, each allowing himself to philosophize in his own fashion, to make systems which he believes more probable, he creates an infinity of differences, which breaks the unity of the faith.*

du poison. . . . Si l'Esprit de Dieu ne suscitoit des personnes, qui ont soin de fouiller dans les Tresors de l'Antiquité pour en tirer la verité, les faux Sçavans broüilleroient toute l'Eglise, & les Heretiques triompheroient."⁵⁰

These desires to maintain the truth of tradition and religious order and unity help to explain Lamy's narrow, limited conception of the role of argument in theology and of right reason more generally. Lamy's conception of reason is geometric rather than practical. The study of logic, where Lamy believes education ought to begin,⁵¹ teaches how to discover new truths or, as he puts it: "Pour connaître une vérité inconnue, ou pour la faire connaître, il la faut déduire de ses principes. Comme dans la nature tout se fait par des lois simples, et en petit nombre, aussi dans les sciences tout se peut déduire d'un petit nombre de vérités."⁵² For Lamy mathematics is also a foundational subject of a student's education since it helps students learn to deduce from first truths.⁵³ In religion, first principles come from scripture, tradition, the church fathers, and the councils that preserve the tradition;⁵⁴ "un théologien raisonne bien et persuade, lorsqu'il tire des saintes Écritures, des Pères, des conciles, et de la tradition, des témoignages propres pour faire voir que son sentiment a toujours été celui de l'Église."⁵⁵ First principles are discovered by using the faculties God has given us and paying "attention à ces premières veritez dont toutes les autres découlent comme de leur source."⁵⁶

Since reasoning only involves deducing other truths from true first principles, Lamy's view of reasoning does not leave room for probability. The aim of logic is not to perfect practical judgment—a

⁵⁰Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 43: *without that, instead of a remedy it gives poison. . . . If the spirit of God did not arouse those who take care to go through the treasures of antiquity to take from there the truth, false scholars would muddle the whole church, and the heretics would triumph.*

⁵¹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 65.

⁵²Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 461–2: *To know an unknown truth, or to make it known, it is necessary to deduce it from its principles. As in nature all is done by laws simple and small in number, so in the sciences all can be deduced from a small number of truths.*

⁵³Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 67; Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 167.

⁵⁴Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 524; *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 285.

⁵⁵Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 443: *a theologian reasons well and persuades when he draws from scriptures, the fathers, councils, and tradition, evidence appropriate for making one see that his sentiment has always been the one of the church.*

⁵⁶Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 65: *attention to the first truths from which all others flow as from their source.*

capacity for example to aim for goods such as the just and expedient in situations involving uncertainty—but to order the intellect and will. The key is to make sure that neither is mistaken, “que par la première [intelligence] il sçache distinguer le vrai d’avec le faux, & que par sa volonté il suive le veritable bien, qui est Dieu; qu’il fuïe l’erreur & le mal: que ses jugemens soient droits & ses affections réglées. En un mot, que l’esprit & le coeur soient ce qu’ils doivent être.”⁵⁷

Lamy does not offer much advice directed explicitly to theologians about how to present truth. Lamy asserts that theology needs eloquence “puisqu’elle ne peut expliquer les vérités spirituelles, qui sont son objet, qu’en les revêtant de paroles sensibles.”⁵⁸ Given his positions on the nature of truth and the role of reason, it may be predictable that in a brief paragraph of advice on a theological style, Lamy’s *Aminte* first recommends clarity.⁵⁹ But the style must not be dry: “C’est une espèce d’irréligion que d’envisager les choses de Dieu sans des mouvements d’amour, de respect et de vénération qui se montrent au-dehors.”⁶⁰ He recommends imitating the style of “le maître des maîtres, Jésus-Christ”⁶¹ and the church fathers, but not the scholastics. Some of the other advice he quickly provides is the following. If a theologian is worried that readers will not pay attention to some point, his discourse must be fuller. If he wants to inspire movements of respect and love for the truths he teaches, his discourse must be animated. It must be short when the aim is to reach the principal point and it must be proportionate to the subject matter.⁶² Lamy offers more advice about how to present truth when discussing preaching.

⁵⁷Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 66, see also p. 81: *that by the first he knows how to distinguish the true from the false, and that by his will he follows the truth well, which is God; that he escapes error and evil: that his judgments are right and his passions ruled. In a word, that the mind and heart are as they must be.*

⁵⁸Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 16: *since it cannot explain spiritual truths, which are its object, but by refurbishing them in perceptible words.*

⁵⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 294.

⁶⁰Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 408: *It is a kind of irreligion to face the things of God without outward expressions of love, respect, and veneration.*

⁶¹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 408: *the master of masters, Jesus Christ.*

⁶²Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 294.

PREACHING EXIGENCIES

Invention need not play any role in preaching if preaching is conceived as a product of divine inspiration only; the preacher then is simply a conduit for divine messages. If invention is conceived as a way of discovering scriptural truths to communicate, then it may partake more of theology and less of preaching; preachers would communicate truth discovered by an art separate from the art of preaching. If invention is conceived as a way of discovering how to make a case for an audience, then invention would be more situational—based more on audience and purpose. These two conceptions are not mutually exclusive: as we have seen, Lamy understands invention as a matter of perceiving scriptural truths; but he also recommends that preachers adapt to particular audiences and situations.⁶³ Again, the choices theorists make are grounded in philosophical assumptions. For example in Lamy's case his position on the nature of truth—all truths are certain—helps to explain his conception of argument as syllogistic or deductive. And it is certainly possible to trace this position to his intellectual sources. Here we supplement this kind of inquiry with a rhetorical or practical one: what practical exigencies relevant to preaching does Lamy say need to be addressed, and how does he propose to address them?

Although the main problem Lamy identifies in theologians is ignorance, he expresses little concern about ignorance in preachers. Preachers simply do not need to know as much as theologians because preachers “n’a que le Peuple pour disciples.”⁶⁴ Instead preachers must teach and move.⁶⁵ Two obstacles they face are the congregation's willful blindness and inattentiveness. Neither can be overcome by argumentation; on the contrary, argumentation can exacerbate both. Therefore Lamy advocates the clear, vivid presentation of truth. In what follows we amplify these points.

We begin with a detailed statement by Lamy of his conception of the preacher's audience, purposes, and means of achieving them:

En un mot, il ne doit rien laisser à deviner, se souvenant qu'il parle au peuple peu instruit, à qui tout est nouveau, et obscur. Comme son but est de porter à Dieu ses auditeurs, de les détacher du monde, de leur faire embrasser la pénitence, haïr le péché, aimer la vertu, il doit ménager tous les avantages qu'il a pour cela; c'est-à-dire, qu'après qu'il

⁶³Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 522.

⁶⁴Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 305: *have only the people for disciples*.

⁶⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 309.

voit que son auditeur est convaincu d'une vérité, il doit en déduire toutes les conséquences favorables à la fin qu'il a en vue, faisant de vives descriptions de la beauté des choses qu'il veut faire aimer, de la difformité de ce qu'il veut faire haïr.⁶⁶

This description is an amplified version of his conception of the goal of eloquence more generally: "Le but qu'on doit avoir dans cette étude, c'est de sçavoir faire connoître la verité, l'expliquer, la persuader, & la faire aimer."⁶⁷ Lamy puts a premium on moving the congregation using deductive reasoning and vivid descriptions. To present truth the key is not to have many arguments but to express truths in many ways—"les faisant paroître sous tant de faces diferentes qu'il est impossible que cette verité ne soit aperçûë."⁶⁸ This position is clear as Lamy praises Cicero not for his argumentation but for "la belle manière de metre une verité en son jour, & de la faire connoître avec tant de varieté & de fecondité, que les esprits les plus distraits soient contrains de l'apercevoir."⁶⁹

This praise of Cicero also points to one of the key obstacles faced by preachers: inattentiveness. For Lamy maintaining a congregation's attention is a significant problem: "il n'y a rien de plus vrai, que de mille personnes qui écoutent un prédicateur un peu spirituel, il n'y en a peut-être pas dix qui soient attentifs."⁷⁰ He asserts that "[l]a plus méchante qualité d'un orateur, c'est d'être ennuyeux."⁷¹ Orators who do not take guard against boring the au-

⁶⁶Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 525: *In a word, he must not leave anything for the hearers to guess, remembering that he speaks to people with little instruction, to whom all is new and obscure. As his goal is to direct his auditors to God, to separate them from the world, to make them embrace penitence, hate sin, love virtue, he must use carefully all the advantages that he has for that; that is to say, after he sees that his auditor is convinced of a truth, he must deduce all the consequences favorable to the end he has in view, making lively descriptions of the beauty of the things that he wants to make them love, of the deformity that he wants to make them hate.*

⁶⁷Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 32: *The goal that one must have in this study is to know how to make known the truth, to explain it, to persuade others of it, and to make it loved.*

⁶⁸Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 133: *to make them appear under so many different guises that it is impossible that the truth will not be perceived.*

⁶⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 145: *the beautiful style of putting a truth in its light, and to make it known with so much variety and fertility, that the most distracted minds are forced to see it.*

⁷⁰Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 463: *there is nothing more true than that, out of a thousand people who listen to a preacher who is somewhat on the spiritual side, maybe ten are paying attention.*

⁷¹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 466: *the most wicked quality of an orator is to be boring.*

dience speak to "rochers."⁷² A second key obstacle is the congregation's willful blindness to truth. Lamy holds that "parce qu'elle [truth] ne s'accommode pas avec leurs intérêts, ils s'aveuglent volontairement pour ne la pas voir; car ils s'aiment trop pour se laisser persuader que ce qui leur est désagréable soit vrai."⁷³ People are blinded not only by their interests but also by ill temper and passion.⁷⁴ A third obstacle speakers may face is ignorance, but Lamy does not say this is a significant obstacle for preachers: "tout l'auditoire est convaincu de ce que dit le prédicateur: on ne le va entendre que pour être touché de quelque sentiment de dévotion."⁷⁵ Therefore it is not necessary that the preacher "entre dans des controverses, comme s'il avait à disputer dans une conférence contre des hérétiques, ou dans une école contre des adversaires qui impugnent ses sentiments. Il ne doit pas faire une leçon de théologie."⁷⁶

How can preachers overcome these obstacles? Lamy rejects argument as a means for overcoming inattentiveness or willful blindness. Arguments do not make people attentive; "le Peuple ne s'appliquant qu'avec peine aux choses speculatives."⁷⁷ Likewise, "[c]'est ... en vain qu'on se sert de fortes raisons, quand on parle à des personnes qui ne veulent pas les entendre, qui persécutent la vérité et, la regardant comme leur ennemie, ne veulent pas envisager son éclat, de crainte de reconnaître leur injustice."⁷⁸ Argument is acceptable if the audience is simply ignorant. As we have seen, Lamy has a narrow conception of argument, describing it in terms of a syllogism: "[n]ous raisonnons lorsque, d'une ou de deux propositions claires et évidentes, nous concluons la vérité ou la fausseté d'une troisième

⁷²Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 464: *rocks*.

⁷³Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 472: *because truth is not accommodated to their interests, they willfully blind themselves to not see it; for they love themselves too much to let themselves be persuaded that what to them is unpleasant is true*.

⁷⁴Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 439.

⁷⁵Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 524: *the audience is convinced of what the preacher says: one goes to listen only to be touched by some sentiment of devotion*.

⁷⁶Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 524–5: *enter in controversies, as if he had to dispute in a lecture against heretics, or in a school against adversaries who impugn his sentiments. He must not give a theology lesson*.

⁷⁷Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 311: *people apply themselves only with pain to speculative things*.

⁷⁸Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 472, see also p. 439: *it is in vain that one uses strong reasons, when one speaks to people who don't want to hear them, who persecute the truth and, regarding it as their enemy, don't want to envision its splendor, for fear of recognizing their injustice*.

proposition obscure et contestée."⁷⁹ This bare presentation of propositions is appropriate in cases where orators seek to persuade "ceux qui nous contestent quelque proposition parce qu'elle leur semble douteuse et obscure."⁸⁰

The near absence of argument in the preacher's rhetorical repertoire may be explained by how Lamy conceives of the relationship between preacher and congregation as well as the speaker-audience relationship generally: hierarchical and adversarial. For example, if a preacher faces a congregation hardened against the truth, "il faut avoir recours aux menaces."⁸¹ It may also be explained by his opinion of the weakness of the congregation's faculty of reason. For example, preachers ought to attend to delivery because "[p]eu de personnes font usage de leur raison. On ne se sert ordinairement que des sens."⁸² In addition, preachers ought to work "s'acquérir de l'autorité dans l'esprit des peuples" in part because authority can replace argument: "[o]n est bien aise de se décharger de la peine d'examiner un raisonnement, et pour cela de s'en fier à l'examen de ceux que l'on estime, et de soumettre son jugement aux lumières de ceux en qui on voit briller une grande sagesse."⁸³

Instead of argument, Lamy advises preachers to use figures. They are particularly important for overcoming the congregation's inattentiveness: "[t]outes les figures de rhétorique ne s'emploient que pour cela."⁸⁴ Even if preachers are to speak on speculative points they "cherchent des tours & des manières d'inspirer de bons mouvements à ceux qui les écoutent."⁸⁵ We quote the following passage

⁷⁹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 87: *we reason when, from one or two clear and evident propositions, we conclude the truth or falsity of an obscure and contested third proposition.*

⁸⁰Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 441: *those who dispute some proposition with us because it seems to them doubtful and obscure.*

⁸¹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 486: *it is necessary to resort to threats.*

⁸²Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 515; see also pp. 514 n. 7 and 179: *few people make use of their reason. One ordinarily only uses the senses.*

⁸³Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 476: *to acquire authority in the minds of the people . . . one is indeed pleased to be released from the pain of examining an argument, and therefore to trust the examination of those whom one esteems, and to submit his judgment to the lights of those in whom one sees shine a great wisdom.*

⁸⁴Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 464, see also p. 221: *all the figures of rhetoric are used only for that.* In later editions of *L'Art de Parler* Lamy describes making the soul attentive as "lui donner de la curiosité" (p. 464). He reduces this to two principles—speak of what is grand or appears to be grand, and introduce the subject gradually rather than all at once (p. 465)—and applies them to preaching (pp. 522–3).

⁸⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 311: *search for tricks and manners of inspiring good emotions in those who listen to them.*

at length to illustrate Lamy's analysis of obstacles and how figures may overcome them.

[P]our triompher de l'opiniâtreté ou de l'ignorance de ceux qui résistent à la vérité, il suffit d'exposer à leurs yeux sa lumière, et de l'approcher de si près que sa forte impression les réveille, et les oblige d'être attentifs. Les figures contribuent merveilleusement à lever ces deux premiers obstacles qui empêchent qu'une vérité ne soit connue; l'obscurité et le défaut d'attention. . . . Comme je n'ai dessein de rapporter, dans la liste que j'ai donnée des figures, que celles que les rhéteurs y placent ordinairement, je n'y ai pas voulu parler des syllogismes, des enthymèmes, des dilemmes, et des autres espèces de raisonnement que l'on traite dans la logique; cependant il est manifeste que ce sont de véritables figures, puisque ce sont des manières de raisonner extraordinaires, qu'on n'emploie que dans l'ardeur que l'on a de persuader, ou de dissuader ceux à qui on parle. . . . Mais la chaleur de la passion ne permet pas que l'on s'assujettisse entièrement aux règles que la logique présente pour faire ces raisonnements en forme.⁸⁶

In this passage Lamy clearly states the obstacles speakers face in communicating truth—obstinacy, ignorance, and inattentiveness—and the importance of figures in overcoming the latter two. Significantly, Lamy conceives of forms of reasoning—syllogisms, enthymemes, dilemmas, and the like—as figures. At first glance then it may seem as if Lamy conceives of style as argument. Such a conception would make a host of figures and perhaps other uses of language count as reasonable appeals, and make Lamy heir to some Renaissance rhetorics and an ancestor of the rhetorics of Kenneth Burke and Chaïm Perelman. But for Lamy figures are natural effects of passion—not reason. They are not regulated by the speaker's talent or art but instead by the substance of his brain.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 225–6: *To triumph over the stubbornness or ignorance of those who resist the truth, it suffices to expose its light to their eyes, and to approach so closely that its strong impression awakens them and obliges them to be attentive. The figures contribute marvelously to remove these two first obstacles which prevent a truth from being known: obscurity and lack of attention. . . . As I intended to bring in, in the list of figures that I have given, only those that rhetors ordinarily place there, I have not wanted to speak of syllogisms, enthymemes, dilemmas, and other kinds of reasoning that one treats in logic; nevertheless it is manifest that these are true figures, since they are extraordinary styles of reasoning that one employs only in the ardor of persuading or dissuading those to whom one speaks. . . . But the heat of passion does not permit one to subject oneself entirely to the rules that logic presents for making arguments in form.*

⁸⁷Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 219, 359.

Lamy's eschewal of artfulness advances his religious program. As we have seen, Lamy limits the role of reason in discovering and presenting theological truths, because some divine truths are beyond reason and because reason can introduce error. Attentive perception only is necessary. What is true for theologians is true for preachers: preachers acquire truth by reading the following: scriptures; "un petit Commentaire, qui explique netement & sans grande Critique le sens literal;" the principal works of the church fathers; moral philosophy, "passant les questions de l'Ecole pour s'appliquer à bien connoître l'esprit & le coeur de l'Homme;"⁸⁸ and a few other select kinds of works. Even for presenting truth to congregations Lamy rejects the use of commonplaces: "[i]l n'y a qu'à méditer les premières vérités de notre religion pour les accommoder à l'intelligence du petit peuple."⁸⁹ Topical inventional systems may help young students "faire leurs déclamations de collège,"⁹⁰ but preachers' eloquence is better formed by consulting examples like Chrysostom and practicing than by precepts or, as Lamy's *Aminte* puts it: "En matière d'éloquence les preceptes servent peu: c'est la lecture des Orateurs & l'exercice qui rend un Predicateur éloquent."⁹¹

Lamy also eschews artfulness with respect to figures because artfulness would produce highly stylized speech and interfere with achieving the preacher's goals. First, highly stylized speech may prevent truth from staying with the congregation. Preachers who attempt to reach a level of grandeur not based on knowledge of the truth move auditors for the moment only; the words of a preacher whose reputation is based on words only "aussi-tôt qu'elles sont imprimées elles perdent leur estime."⁹² But real grandeur which is based on knowledge of truth stays with auditors.⁹³

Second, highly stylized speech makes congregations attend more to the preacher and his reputation than to the truths he is communicating. Some speakers overuse figures because "leur dessein n'est

⁸⁸Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 305: *a small commentary, which explains clearly and without great critical analysis the literal sense . . . leaving aside academic questions to apply oneself well to knowing the mind and heart of humans.*

⁸⁹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 520: *one has only to contemplate the first truths of our religion to accommodate it to the intelligence of plain folks.*

⁹⁰Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 454: *make their high school declamations.*

⁹¹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 308; see also Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 465: *In the subject of eloquence precepts serve little; it is the reading of the orators and practice which make a preacher eloquent.*

⁹²Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 307: *as soon as they are imprinted they lose their esteem.*

⁹³Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 525–6, 459.

pas de persuader, mais seulement de paraître éloquents."⁹⁴ As Lamy says about a speaker with a reputation as an "homme disert": "Toutes ces affectations, ces grands mots, ces cadences trop étudiées ne valent rien, parcequ'ils empêchent l'efet de l'Eloquence, qui est de faire apercevoir les choses dont on parle."⁹⁵ When preachers focus not on scriptural truth but on what may be described as "mere rhetoric," their congregations remain ignorant or, as Lamy puts it:

from hence likewise come the declaimers, which fill our pulpits; for I think no man can give the quality of preachers of the word of God, to those who quote it seldom. We find them promising in the beginning of the discourses, to explain the *Scriptures*; but in the pursuit of them, they think of nothing but tickling the ears and minds of their auditors, with far-fetched thoughts and elegant expressions. Thus is [*sic*] the people deprived of solid nourishment; thus do christians continue in ignorance of the knowledge of salvation.⁹⁶

Lamy's Aminte echoes this sentiment in *Entretiens sur les Sciences* as he opposes a declamatory style in part on religious grounds, asserting that declamation "est criminelle quand on s'en sert dans les Chaires de nos Eglises, dont elle fait un Théâtre. Ceux qu'elle y attire ne cherchent que le plaisir passager qu'elle donne, après quoi ils se retirent pleins d'admiration pour l'Orateur & vuides de l'amour de Dieu, qu'on avoit fait semblant de leur vouloir inspirer."⁹⁷ Lamy's Aminte praises a preacher who

ne s'aplique pas à divertir ses Auditeurs par une éloquence pompeuse; par des paroles riches & étudiées, par des mouvemens qui n'ont point d'autre fin que de produire dans les Auditeurs, de l'Admiration pour le Predicateur; qu'il joue la comedie en chaire; ou si cette expression est trop forte, qui fait comme faisoient autres fois ces Déclamateurs, qui amassoient une troupe de flateurs, devant qui ils recitoient les Ouvrages de leur vanité.⁹⁸

⁹⁴Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 232: *their intention is not to persuade, but only to appear eloquent.*

⁹⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 134: *All these affectations, these grandiose words, these too studied cadences are worth nothing, because they prevent the effect of Eloquence, which is to make seen the things of which one speaks.*

⁹⁶Lamy, *Apparatus biblicus*, cited in n. 16 above, p. viii.

⁹⁷Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 148: *is criminal when one uses it in the pulpits of our churches, of which she makes a theatre. Those whom she attracts search only for the passing pleasure that she gives, after which they withdraw full of admiration for the orator and empty of God's love, which one had pretended to want to inspire in them.*

⁹⁸Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 309: *does not apply himself to entertain his auditors by pompous eloquence, by rich and studied words, by movements which have no end*

The congregation is not to attend to the preacher himself, “qui doit se faire oublier, afin que l’on ne pense qu’à Dieu.”⁹⁹ Auditors must not “laissent les choses pour considerer les paroles;”¹⁰⁰ “[u]ne âme élevée aime et cherche dans le discours la vérité, et non pas des paroles.”¹⁰¹ Even the Holy Spirit conducting the writing of the apostles directs them to not use “cette éloquence pompeuse des orateurs profanes, qui arrête les yeux, et fait que l’on ne considère que les superbes paroles dont les choses sont revêtues.”¹⁰²

Jockeying for social position may also motivate Lamy’s advocacy of “natural” rather than artificial eloquence. Lamy describes the use of an ornamented style as a mark of lesser lights: a style involving nothing but “des jeux de mots, & des tours extraordinaires, qui n’ont point d’autre fin que de surprendre par une fausse apparence . . . est une marque que leur esprit est petit.”¹⁰³ Those who are “solides,” in contrast, “aiment les choses & non les paroles, ils ne regardent que la vérité.”¹⁰⁴ Lamy’s Theodose laments about *honnêtes hommes*: “Ils n’ont plus de sentimens de Religion.”¹⁰⁵ He reports an encounter with a young man who was reading a book: “Ce livre est tout propre à faire oublier Dieu, à former un honnête Païen, c’est-à-dire, qui met sa félicité en soi-même, ou qui ne la cherche que dans les plaisirs sensibles.”¹⁰⁶

Lamy distinguishes argument not only from style and in particular figures, but also from using premises accepted by the audience. We

but to produce in auditors admiration for the preacher who acts comedy in the pulpit; or if this expression is too strong, who does as these declaimers did in the past, who would amass a band of flatterers before whom they would recite the works of their vanity.

⁹⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 306: *who must make himself forgotten, so that one thinks only of God.*

¹⁰⁰Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 307: *leave the things to consider the words.*

¹⁰¹Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 429: *a lofty soul loves and searches in discourse for truth, and not words.*

¹⁰²Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 433: *this pompous eloquence of the secular orators, which stops the eyes, and causes one to consider only the superb words in which the things are dressed.*

¹⁰³Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 142: *puns and extraordinary turns, which have no other end but to surprise by a false appearance . . . is a mark of their small wit.*

¹⁰⁴Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 142: *love things and not words, they regard only the truth.*

¹⁰⁵Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 129: *They no longer have sentiments of religion.*

¹⁰⁶Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 131: *This book is appropriate to make one forget God, to form an honest pagan, that is to say, one who places his own happiness in himself, or who searches only for pleasures of the senses.*

see this in his discussion of how to overcome obstinacy or a congregation's willful blindness to truths that work against their interests. What could be called argument Lamy calls "l'adresse."¹⁰⁷ Lamy discusses two cases where a preacher aims to persuade members of a congregation to act in ways that are against their self-interest. A preacher can persuade a woman who cares only for her own beauty to not wear makeup by showing that makeup ruins her complexion; and can dissuade from debauchery a man who indulges all of his pleasures by proposing to him milder pleasures or by persuading him that his indulgences will be followed by great pain.¹⁰⁸ Lamy describes this as cunning rather than argument based on premises accepted by the audience, because for him arguments involve deducing propositions from true premises and some of the premises accepted by the audience—perhaps in these cases that beauty and pleasure are among the highest goods—are not true. Thus Lamy maintains a hard and fast distinction between truth and belief or opinion, a distinction that makes it possible for him to claim that there is a single true interpretation of scripture rather than multiple plausible interpretations.

CONCLUSIONS

The religious exigencies that Lamy says theologians and preachers need to address help to explain why developing a cartesian view of rhetoric—in particular a near absence of art and argument—would be appealing. If ignorance, inattention, and obstinacy are problems; if argument at best is irrelevant to resolving them and at worst exacerbates them; and if truth claims are either true or false rather than more or less probable, then it is not surprising that Lamy holds a circumscribed view of invention and argument. Certainly vectors of influence cannot be disentangled; we have suggested that practical exigencies motivated his selection of intellectual sources, but at the same time his intellectual sources may have motivated his analysis of practical exigencies. In any case, the evidence we have presented supports the claim that Lamy's positions on rhetorical issues—the nature of truth; the nature and function of invention, arguments and figures; the speaker-audience relationship—reflect his take on religious exigencies that rhetorical practices (theology, preaching) are designed to address and about which *L'Art de Parler* advises.

¹⁰⁷Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 479.

¹⁰⁸Lamy, *Art*, cited in n. 1 above, p. 480.

Although here we have focused on religion, it is worth noting an important political implication of this view of rhetoric: no checks and balances are built into it; it relies heavily on the integrity of the speaker. As Lamy observes, the eloquent speaker—where “eloquent” means able to imprint his ideas on the brains of auditors—is of great use in a republic “pourveu que celui qui le possède soit sage, c’est-à-dire, qu’il juge sainement des choses, & qu’il ne donne entrée dans son coeur qu’à des mouvemens justes. Les Orateurs dont l’esprit & le coeur sont corrompus empoisonnent le peuple & le remplissent d’opinions fausses & de passions dérégées.”¹⁰⁹ These potential harms could be avoided by a conception and practice of rhetoric that leaves room for audiences to make judgments, but Lamy’s understanding of his religious circumstances forecloses this possibility. Eloquence in the sense of wisdom speaking copiously is for Lamy a cause of conflict rather than a desirable means of addressing it.

Of course religious exigencies do not entail the view of rhetoric Lamy espouses. Confronted by circumstances involving conflict and uncertainty, thinkers may choose among several live alternatives. Among these is an orientation toward certainty which assumes that even in civic domains it is possible and desirable to identify a single truth. Alternatively, it is possible to respond to conflict and uncertainty with an attitude of tolerance and commitment to earned belief, and to develop rhetorics that engender these. In the case of religious rhetorics this could involve ways of generating multiple plausible scriptural interpretations and presenting them with argumentation and amplification designed to solicit judgment rather than compel compliance. But Lamy’s rhetoric is not designed to cultivate this kind of action, and the practical need to counter his version of “rhetoric” continues.

¹⁰⁹Lamy, *Entretiens*, cited in n. 14 above, p. 134: *provided that the one who possesses it is wise, that is to say, that he judges soundly of things, and that he gives entrance in his heart only to just movements. The orators in whom the mind and heart are corrupt poison the people and fill them with false opinions and disordered passions.*